

Reading Connection

Working Together for Learning Success

March 2016

Bennet Academy
Joseph Chella, Principal

Book Picks

■ *The Invention of Hugo Cabret* (Brian Selznick)

Twelve-year-old Hugo is determined to find out how his dead father, a broken robot, and an old toy-maker are connected. But while he does, he must keep a secret—he lives alone in a Paris train station. Will Hugo be able to repair the robot without getting caught? A mystery novel with stunning illustrations. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ *Parrots Over Puerto Rico*

(Susan L. Roth and Cindy Trumbore)



This is the true story of one of the world's most endangered birds, the Puerto Rican parrot. Your child can read about the history of the island, learn how humans have affected the parrots, and discover what scientists are doing to save the beautiful birds.

■ *The Tapper Twins Go to War (With Each Other)*

(Geoff Rodkey)

Twins Claudia and Reese Tapper are waging a prank war against one another.

The twins each tell their side of the hilarious story through emails, interviews, cartoons, text messages, and chat logs. When the dust settles, does anybody really win? The first book in the Tapper Twins series.



■ *Making Books That Fly, Fold, Wrap, Hide, Pop Up, Twist & Turn*

(Gwen Diehn)

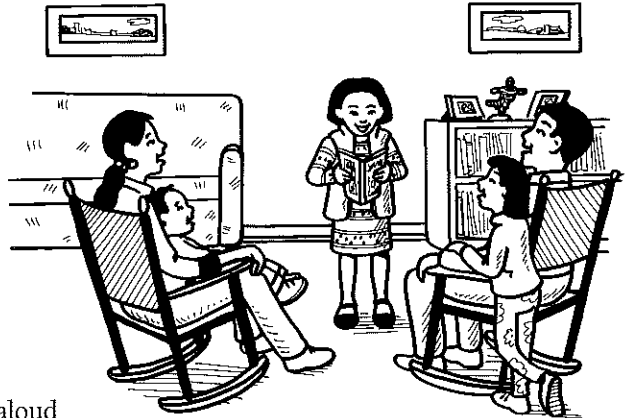
Your child can learn to create home-made books with this guide. Eighteen projects include books with secret compartments, books made into scrolls, and pop-up books. Features diagrams and

photographs, along with suggestions for writing and illustrating each type of book.



The road to fluency

When your youngster reads fluently, she recognizes words without much effort, understands the material, and uses good expression. Reading this way will help her do better in all subjects. Here are fun suggestions for building fluency by reading and rereading books and other material.



Be a comedian

Have your youngster read aloud from a joke book, looking up unfamiliar words so she won't stumble over them and so she "gets" the humor. She can rehearse until she's comfortable and then hold a stand-up comedy night where she reads favorite jokes to friends or relatives.

she's not satisfied with. *Idea:* Let her entertain your family by playing the recording at dinner or in the car.

Do impressions

Together, list six characters your whole family is familiar with. *Examples:* Scooby-Doo, the Queen of Hearts, Little Orphan Annie. Write each character's name on a separate index card and stack the cards facedown. Now, pick a magazine or newspaper article your child can read. Take turns drawing a card and reading a paragraph in that character's voice. When all the cards are used, start over with a new article. ■

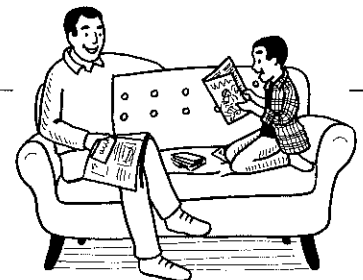
Record a story

Ask your child to read a short story aloud a few times, and watch for places where the meaning might change if she reads with different expression. For example, should "That's just fantastic!" sound enthusiastic or sarcastic? Understanding the passage will determine her tone. Next, record her reading the story. She could listen and re-record any parts

Writing together

Turn writing into a family affair with these activities:

- Write about a simple activity or task you do regularly—it can be something you like or don't like. Each person chooses his own topic, perhaps playing hopscotch, riding the school bus, or washing the dishes. Swap papers, and see what you learn about each other's days.
- Let your child choose a sentence from a magazine, and have family members each put it into a story. The twist: One person has to use the sentence as his opening, another has to make it the ending, and the others have to put it in the middle. Read your stories aloud. How did the placement of the sentence change the plot? ■



Research strategies

Knowing how to find information is a skill that will serve your child well throughout school—and in his career and life. These tips can help him find and keep track of facts when he writes reports.

Know what's inside. Will a book, an article, or a website contain the facts your youngster needs? Have him list information he wants. For a report on hippopotamuses, his list might include “diet,” “habitat,” and “lifespan.” Then, he could check his list against the table of contents or index in each book or use the search feature on each website.



Organize before taking notes. Have your child set aside a separate sheet of paper for each category of facts and jot his notes on the appropriate sheet as he reads. For instance, a report about a famous person may include sheets for “childhood,” “education,” and “accomplishments.” That way, his facts will already be sorted—and easy to find—when he's ready to write.

Tip: Remind your youngster to use his own words when he takes notes. He should put quotes around any information he copies directly and cite the source. ■

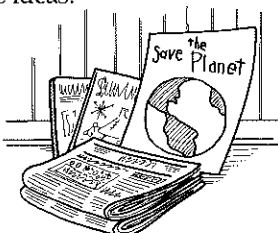
Read and write for a cause

There are many reasons for your youngster to read and write. Here's a good one: to make a difference in the world! Try these ideas.

1. Suggest that your child find an event your family can participate in. She could read neighborhood newsletters and bulletin boards to learn about a stream cleanup day or a race to raise money for cancer research. Remind her to write down the details, including the date, time, and location.

2. Give your youngster brochures or newsletters that your power or water company sends or the inserts that come in your bills. Based on what she reads, can she write up a plan for your family to use less energy or water?

3. Clip or print out news articles about issues she feels strongly about, such as animal rights or pollution. Then, encourage her to write a letter to the editor expressing her views and stating what she believes the community should do. ■



Fun with Words

Singular or plural?

Should that verb be singular or plural? If the subject of the sentence is a pronoun, it can be tricky for youngsters to decide. Play this game to help your child match pronouns with the correct verbs.

On separate index cards, you and your youngster should write:

- six singular pronouns, such as *I, she, he, you, everybody, someone*
- six plural pronouns like *we, they, few, many, several, both*
- six singular verbs, such as *loves, dances, or giggles*
- six plural verbs like *eat, swim, or tell*

Hint: Singular verbs end with *s*, and plural ones don't—even though that might seem backward!

Place all the cards facedown in rows. Take turns flipping over two at a time. If you get a singular subject and a singular verb, use them in a sentence. (“Everybody loves chocolate.”) Keep the cards, and turn over two more. If the words don't go together (“Everybody love”), flip them back over, and your turn ends.

When all the cards are used (or you can't make any more sentences), the player with the most pairs wins. ■



Q&A Jog your memory

Q My son says it's hard to remember information that he studies. Any suggestions that might help?

A Encourage your child to use memory strategies to remember facts. For example, he can try visual devices, like picturing a girl named Georgia swimming in the Atlantic to recall Georgia's capital (Atlanta).

Also, have your youngster think up acronyms as memory aids, such as JEL for the three branches of government

(judicial, executive, legislative). Or he could link each word he needs to remember with a familiar item. For the presidents on Mt. Rushmore (Washington, Jefferson, Roosevelt, Lincoln), he might use favorite drinks—water, juice, root beer, and lemonade.

Idea: Suggest that he illustrate the memory devices and post them. Writing them out—and having them in view—are memory builders, too. ■



OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote their children's reading, writing, and language skills.

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www.rfeonline.com
ISSN 1540-5583